DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 701 CS 212 560

AUTHOR Pomper, Marlene M.; Brown, Sandra

TITLE Writes of Passage.

PUB DATE 89

NOTE 33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Speech Communicators Association (Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1989).

PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Basic Skills; *Basic Writing; *Classroom Environment; Compensatory Education; Cooperative Learning; Developmental Studies Programs; Higher Education; *Learning Activities; Remedial Programs; *Remedial Reading; Student Journals; *Teacher Student Relationship

IDENTIFIERS Cultural Literacy

ABSTRACT

Written by instructors who not only accept but also elect the challenge of teaching basic skills classes in reading and writing to freshmen at the community college and technical college level, this paper examines, first, the basis for the pedagogy employed: the theoretical concepts and the actual students on which the teaching of developmental reading and writing is based. Next, the paper explains what is done to create an environment that facilitates students' development. The paper then demonstrates methodology and course content, including six exercises/approaches found particularly successful. Lastly, it discusses conclusions about basic skills teaching, cultural literacy, and power. Twenty-four references are attached. (SR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED324701

WRITES of PASSAGE

Marlene Pomper and Sandra Brown

Seventh Annual Conference on Rhetoric and Composition

A Challenge: The Promotion of Cultural Literacy

What separates us from the rest of the animal kingdom is our "language, culture, morality, and ..consciousness of life and death." (Langer, 1970) To be truly human, one must be culturally literate. To read broadly, to speak without censure, and to write freely are to discover one's values and to ultimately develop a system for articulating those values which can give new meaning to the fullness of human experience; that is, cultural literacy. Such is the purpose of education.

Unfortunately, many of today's college students are aliterate. They can read, but they don't. They can write, but they don't. As a consequence, their knowledge base is often limited to concrete or sensationalistic media experiences. With appropriate education, however, they can overcome these deficiencies. While teaching reading and writing at the college level, we regularly witness our students' passage to cultural literacy and its effect on their lives.

CS212560

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Marlene Pomper

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Student Expectation and Instructor Determination

Our students' initial expectations are not our own. Many are uncertain of success mainly because they are unable to "to tolerate or make sense out of a school-based experience that is relatively isolated from non-school experience." (Resnick,1988) Their confusion and alienation result in a learned helplessness.

Primarily, students expect that we will transmit knowledge and they will memorize facts. They also expect to have ideas broken down to simple components that will be taught atomistically in isolation from supporting ideas, audience and purpose. They view reading and writing merely as subjects. And they expect to hate them.

We realize that our students' negative expectations come, in part, from the reputation of basic skills courses as "busy work" mandated often by cut-off scores on standardized tests or departmental placement examinations. Add to that the stigma our freshmen feel as a result of the "substandard" label. Even among the ranks of academia, the teaching of these basic skills teaching is much maligned. Since such courses serve open-enrollment students who do not as yet meet the demands of their institutions, those

teaching these courses often are considered, for some mysterious reason, to be inferior instructors or intellects.

Yet, two of us who teach such students not only accept but also elect this challenge. Why? We believe that students entering an institution of higher learning, even one with open enrollment, show promise and perseverence. Our rewards as their instructors come in giving full range to the development of their ability and in feeling their excitement and growing self-assurance in doing so. Together we make meaning of lives and texts. We see our students continuing discussions long after class periods end. They often will meet in libraries, laboratories, and homes. These new experiences and connections help them to become the kind of independent learners who read other works by the authors they read or go to lectures to hear these authors speak. When we note students' respect for opposing and original ideas, or when we hear them logically and passionately challenge them, we feel they are well on their way to becoming educated.

This paper will examine, first, the basis for our pedagogy: the theoretical concepts and the actual students on which our teaching is based. Next, we will explain what we do to create an environment that facilitates their

development. We will then demonstrate the nature of our craft, including our methodology and course content. Last, we will discuss our conclusions about basic skills teaching, cultural literacy, and power.

Theoretical Constructs in Reading and Writing

While it is often difficult to integrate theory and practice, it is important to do so. Many studies refute the notion that students' instruction in grammar and the instructor's line-by-line correction of every student paper will guarantee improved performance in student writing. A written outline need not precede work, as the writing process is often non-linear. Instead, early intervention in the writing process by instructor and/or peers is recommended. Yet many instructors still cling to their own outdated notions. (Gary and Brown, 1981)

Our emphasis on inductive learning is inspired by the work of many fine theoreticians. We share their concern with critical self-examination, problem-posing, human feeling and the relationship of the private mind to public knowledge and beliefs. Thus we have designed our curriculum around the following constructs: (1) that learning requires not simply

the transmission of knowledge but also its reconstruction by the learner; (2) that reading and writing are not subjects but processes that significantly enable the learner to reconstruct that knowledge; (3) that these processes range from the aesthetic reading stance and reflexive writing mode to the efferent stance and the extensive mode; (4) that both processes can connect the impersonal or cognitive domain with the personal or affective domain; (5) that reading and writing may be both holistically and analytically taught, learned, performed, and evaluated; (6) that both processes are enhanced by speaking and listening in small interactive discussion groups, and (7) they should be taught together.

We believe that these governing constructs provide our students with sound teaching practices that encourage and expand their ability to read and write while improving both their self-image and global view. We believe that if we show our students that we are aware of current research on reading and writing, if we show a willingness to conduct our own in-class research, and if we are willing to change our practices accordingly, we will become the kind of informed classroom activists we would like our students to be.

What Our Students Are Like

Before putting our theory to practice, we need to be aware of the nature of our students, their knowledge and interests, attitudes, similarities and differences. Then we can provide them with texts and activities appropriate to them and to the environments in which we teach. In our case, one of us teaches eight to ten two-credit reading courses in a small, seaside community college in New Jersey. The other teaches two five-credit joint courses in reading and writing with CAI in a four-year technical college in New York City.

Our seaside and city students would strike a casual observer as being entirely different. While the seaside students are primarily white English speakers, the city students are largely minority members or new immigrants who need to master standard English. While the seaside students rely upon the college as their chief cultural resource, the city students are in close proximity to museums, theaters, libraries etc., yet few attend for lack of time, money or motivation.

However, in many ways our students are remarkably alike. Most are of the first generation in their families to attend college. They are low to medium income students.

Often they are the children of single parents or are themselves single parents. As a consequence, most work after school at low-paying, monotonous jobs that provide them little opportunity for either a larger world vision or inner reflection.

Student Empowerment for Action-Based Learning

Our students' home environments provide little, if any, discussion of issues and ideas. Books, magazines, and often even newspapers are rare. Verbal interaction, as Basil Bernstein noted in his own study, tends to be monosyllabic, generally in the form of commands; reactions are often stereotypical: physical responses of submission, obeissance, or even intimidation are common. (35) Such authoritarianism hampers thought. Our students' constricted language code and cultural myopia affect not only their perceptions but even their morality. A democratic environment lets them discover that language is in-and-of-itself empowering. By changing the locus of control in the classroom, we help students learn that their instructors are not their primary audience. Our students engage in group discussions,

collaborative reading, writing and even peer evaluation projects. In these groups, they find confirmation for their ideas, learn to take risks, and discover it is alright to be wrong. From the dialogic exchange, they learn to anticipate multiple interpretations when reading and writing.

Students who learn to perceive the purposes of instruction to be largely those of problem solving, self expression, and the formation of independent judgements are less intimitated by their professors' authority than those who merely parrot lectured facts. Only when they can see some benefits in doing so will they master the complexities of college level reading and writing and become willing initiates in the process of literary acculturation.

The Reading Process

To teach reading is to teach something invisible, for there is no way to observe the perfection of a product, nor even to evaluate the evolution of a process. Furthermore, to teach it to college freshmen is to teach people who believe they already know how to do it. How then should we proceed? The answers to this question are exceedingly complex.

Language is surely our most common symbol system, but to unlock the meanings of college level texts purposively and effectively requires much more of the reader than mere decoding. Those so involved need to be able to translate both public information and the personal thoughts of strangers into their own thoughts and inner reality. College students enrolled in developmental reading courses often decode and even memorize print without understanding how to translate it--how to connect it to themselves. Engaged reading often requires some knowledge of rhetoric to initiate the eye-brain-inner ear connections that Emig feels are necessary to create meaning from the printed page.

In order to encourage freshmen to approach with new energy the reading of specific modes they have previously found difficult, meaningless, boring or too esoteric, we provide for reading and discussion clusters of written pieces, paired or grouped for contrast. Students' unhampered interpretations and free statements of preference serve as a means of analyzing each perceived reading task. To deliberately teach developmental reading, then, is to help students discover the intentions of, and the relationships among, authors, texts, and readers whose multiple perspectives influence interpretation.

The scaffold thus erected permits for the building of thought that grows as students read works written in a variety of rhetorical modes at varying levels of complexity. The object is to respect texts but to revere students' thinking more -- and to encourage readers to share analyses of the readings and their readings at every stage of progress.

The Writing Process

Writing is not merely a single kind of ability, but a cluster of abilities that varies with regard to the reader for whom it is intended and the purpose it is to serve. The key, then, to designing writing assignments to provoke well-written papers lies in an examination of the composing process rather than an examination of the composition product. The physical chemist and philosopher Michael Polanyi asserts that in acquiring culture of civilization, "we ...feel our way forward," (62) a principle applicable to both writing and classroom dialogue. Self-sponsored or reflexive writing such as journal keeping or ungraded class assignments enable students to explain their thought processes. Thus it encourages the vital link between what

is known and what is coming to be known. Reflexive writing can be directed to self, peers, the instructor as a trusted partner in dialogue or even to an unknown audience. (Britton,15)

To avoid an imposible paper load and provide students with vital opportunity to practice writing, instructors may encourage responsive writing with peer critiquing. Checklists for self and peer evaluation can serve as guides during the composing process. These process writings will help students work through their difficulties with course content and can be later synthesized in the writing of essays or term papers.

Writing assignments should elicit more than a flat demonstration of achieved knowledge; they should reveal the writer's personal endorsement, promote understanding, and further competence. To set their own agenda for learning, students will need to introduce materials of interest to their classmates, along with current and relevant information such as statistics, names and other evidence to validate their theses. They will, therefore, need to develop library research skills.

Pedagogy for Enhancing Learning

Our challenge is to learn to "read" our students, theirs is to learn to "read" us, their fellow students, and texts if they are to succeed in college and the world outside. Consequently, during the first week of the semester, they interview and introduce each other to the class, thus enabling us to get an overview of their language levels and interests. We use freewriting, brainstorming, mapping, charting as means of ending their writers block and of organizing their thoughts. Most of our initial writing is informal and includes friendly letters of introduction. From the first class, we incorporate methods that can serve as models for group and independent learning. Triple entry journals help many students to learn and reflect on that learning. Students learn to distinguish between two reading stances: the "efferent and the aesthetic" (Rosenblatt, 25-27) so that they can see that we read differently for different purposes. Therefore, we provide a series of lessons enabling them to infer the contrasts between these stances. Moreover, we distinguish between "reflexive and extensive" (Emig, 1971, 4) writing with them. We demonstrate how the best writing combines both modes. As

play is learning, we incorporate guided fantasies and playful "what ifs?" into our curriculum. Related activities allow our students to connect with a larger universe, broaden their conceptual framework, and accomodate their framework to the multiple perspectives of their classmates. We will now demonstrate some of these activities by providing some of the specific exercises we have designed.

Texts For Reading and Writing

Cultural literacy requires facility with a variety of texts that provide a bridge between college and the world outside. Therefore, our class texts range from students' own writing to current and complete newspaper and magazine articles, both modern and traditional novels, textbooks, in-class films, photos and slides. The very behavior needed for engaged reading and writing emenates from informed and selective perceptions of human events. (Polanyi,1958) Indeed, such perceptions gave birth to the writing they read.

Reading and writing instructors can facilitate students' rites of passage by encouraging reflexive writing

in response to all forms of texts. These "writes of passage" motivate real learning and meet real needs. Our function is the rhetorical one of "adjusting ideas to [students]...[students] to ideas."(Bryant,19)

THE WRITES OF PASSAGE

Getting Started in Writing: Unblocking and Organizing

Developmental writing students, as a rule, respond with anxiety to the mandate to draft an essay. For non-native and inner city speakers of English, this experience can be particularly traumatic. The introduction of freewriting and brainstorming, early in the course, relaxes students and enables them to learn to cluster, categorize, define, compare and contrast ideas.

EXERCISE (Time: 1 1/2 hours)

- Freewrite for 10 minutes (that means write as quickly as possible without stopping to evaluate or edit) in order to complete the following statement:

  To me, reading is-----.

- Next freewrite for 10 minutes to complete the statement:

  To me, writing is---

- Underline all significant ideas in your freewriting.
- Brainstorm your responses to the reading and then the writing question so that they can be recorded on separate chalkboards. (Quickly call out your underlined answers without considering other students' answers.)
- Arrange ideas into clusters by suggesting chalk connections.
- From these clusters, develop categories with appropriate headings that are just large enough to contain the materials below. (ie. One heading might be: Attitudes Toward Reading)
- Following our discussion of these categories, their similarities and differences for reading and writing and all you have learned about both processes: (1) Define reading; (2) Define writing.
- Discuss and challenge each other's definitions, and if need be, revise your own definitions accordingly.

Students' responses may be attitudinal, so we include a brief discussion as to why some hate reading, writing or both. Some may talk about the contents of writing or genres. Or, they may list skills needed in writing such as a good vocabulary and punctuation, sometimes even handwriting or those of reading such as correct pronunciation providing us the opportunity to discuss deep and superficial processes. A comparison and contrast of the two processes and the need to define them lead students to an awareness of symbol systems, of encoding and decoding. Moreover, they come to realize that comprehension and composition are

parallel processes that require the integration of their own or others' life experiences through speaking and listening.

The Triple Entry Journal

A triple entry journal is particulary valuable in teaching developmental reading in college.

EXERCISE

Each journal entry consists of three sections. The first entry each day consists of freewriting for five minutes at the start of each class. You are to consider what you may learn in the class session, how you feel about the learning process, how you feel the assignment was, or any other idea regarding the experience of reading and learning. To expedite the writing of this section, a question or topic may be written on the chalkboard to which students do not have to respond if they choose another idea.

The second section each day will consist of the taking of class notes. If you are assigned homework that does not require a written response in the textbook itself, use the second section for this home assignment. The second section, then, is used to record homework and classwork. You are also to include any group work (jottings).

The third entry will consist of your personal response to the ongoing work--your problems with it, and your breakthroughs. This section can become the place to ask the questions you do not care to ask out loud in class. Consider this section the place to reflect about your learning. Write this section some time after class is over--perhaps in the evening. You might think about how well you enjoyed the class that particular day, or how you learned something completely new. Or, of course, you may reflect your feelings of dissatisfaction with the day's work, including its pace and level of difficulty. Make things connect in this section. How do all three daily entries fit together?

Try to relate each day's lesson with something you already know.

This journal is not a private diary. Please do not record events that are of a personal nature.

Journals are read by the instructor twice during the semester. At that time, the instructor writes comments in an informal, supportive way to the student entries, where appropriate. Toward the end of the semester, these journals are assigned a grade based upon previously discussed criteria, decided upon jointly by students and the instructor. One of the most important of these is <u>fullness</u>.

<u>Collaborative Writing Project: Group Essay</u>

A project of proven value, as confirmed by Robert Slavin's study and personal classroom experience, involves collaborative writing of a group essay.[3] Taught to be competitive and inherently defensive about making mistakes, developmental readers particularly enjoy the switch to collaborative learning. Given a clear set of guidelines, such a class can enjoy the liberating comfort of the group dialogue that works through a problem. Moreover, it is particularly appropriate for CAI. This project has several parts.

EXERCISE (Complete in six class periods)

- For homework, read "School for Marriage," an essay be Joan Libman in Steps in Composition pp. 100-103 describing a course being taught in many high schools concerning marriage and family life. Answer the Reading Survey questions on p. 104.

- Discuss your homework reading in class.

- Read Shirley Radl's essay: "One Mother's Blast at Motherhood," from TRRPWR describing her marriage. Answer the follow up questions on the handout.

- Through discussion, determine whether or not Radl would have profited by such a course. Then answer interpretive and inferential questions on the essay.

- Read, copy and discuss the following 1983 U.S. Census statistics on marriage:
    - New marriages that will end in divorce-50%
    - Average family size - 1.8.
    - Average age of marriage- F (23) M (27)
    - Out of 62 million families, only 24 million have their own children.
    - 10 million households are headed by females.
        - 6 million of them have children.

- Write a group essay (an explanation will follow) using some of these statistics as you see fit.

- Interview people whose marriages you judge to be successful or unsuccessful to get some ideas with which to develop and support your thesis.

- Develop a thesis statement to suit your information. (Remember that a thesis contains both the heart of, and your view towards, your subject.)

- List your theses on the board, to clarify them and to convince others to join your group.

- Form groups of 4-5 students each. Then divide your thesis into 4-5 topic sentences, one for each supporting paragraph. Each student is responsible

for a carefully written and supported paragraph.

(You may choose to exchange phone numbers now or plan to meet in the library or computer lab to review preliminary drafts.)

- In the computer lab, merge your files (after demo). Follow guidelines for introduction, transitions, and conclusions. Write them jointly with group.

- Run off enough copies of the essay draft for each member of your group. Then revise and edit you own draft by following editorial guidelines and by using block moves and deletions.

- Share individual revisions and editings. Discuss, and agree on second draft. Complete your second draft, and submit for group comments and a group grade.

- Each groups will read papers aloud to the class.

While doing this work, students learn that the same topic may be viewed from multiple perspectives. Moreover, they enjoy solving writing problems in a journalistic fashion by using interview techniques and statistics. They learn to how to revise and edit their work by seeing how others do so.

This activity, while seemingly time-consuming is really timesaving, as it serves as a model for much of the work they will need to do both in college in the working world. Today's employers demand that our graduates be capable of teamwork, know how to use such tools as calculators and computers, and have a practical, context-based, as well as a

theoretical knowledge. In response, many academicians are abandoning the notion of learning as testing.

Changing Identities: Role Playing Using Photos

[illegible] is an Indian saying, "Do not judge me until you have walked a mile in my moccasins." From such empathy comes learning that connects people and cultures. This exercise serves to combine the personal/affective with the cognitive /intellectual dimensions through role playing.

EXERCISE

- Select a photograph that appeals to you from The Family of Man collection.
- Imaginatively, assume that person's identity.
- Write an essay as that person would if he or she could do so.
- Try to identify the speaker from his/her writing.
- Discuss the effectiveness of the writing.
  - What was most effective about the writing?
  - What was least effective?
  - Consider consistency of voice, appropriateness of word choice and style.

This process is very revealing of students and the degree to which they can identify with other beings. In Piagetian terms, it allows their instructors to determine if students can adequately integrate multiple perspectives. One student actually became the newborn baby in the delivery

room. A very angry young man in the beginning of the semester, he had revealed that his mother had been murdered. Something happened after he wrote this piece. He started to love writing, became incredibly creative, and won a photography project showing himself emerging from an egg. Another student chose a picture depicting an audience attending an opera. He revealed that he had always wanted to be rich enough to buy a ticket and wear a tuxedo to an opening night. At least, he could do so in his writing.

In the last few semesters students have made such choices during their professor's office hour. For some reason, one picture, that of a Vietnamese soldier carrying a gun and standing watch over a rice paddy, was one more students independently chose to write about than any other. When asked the basis for their choice, several revealed that they could understand that soldier's feelings because in the poverty-ridden neighborhoods from which they hail, they too are guarding their turf from imminent danger. This lesson makes students' personal constructs clearer to their professors. It also makes students conscious of the need for a clear, coherent voice and an awareness of audience.

Three Writers Writing/Three Readers Reading

An exercise students especially like combines the role-playing of the photo essay with the collaboration of the group essay. "Three Writers Writing/Three Readers Reading," adapted from a poem (Andrews 29-31), is designed to demonstrate point of view, character development, dialogue, and plot structure as well as other elements in narrative form.

Divided into groups of three, each student writes, then reads the dialogue of a specific character associated with a person in a photograph.

EXERCISE

I. The Writing

- Select a magazine photo of a person and share with two others.
- Each person writes five sentences.
- Student "A" writes as the character in one photo. "A" explains why he/she had to do something in the recent past, or has something in the present. Eg.: "I had to get away fast."
- Student "B" writes as the character's mother, father, child, lover or best friend. "B" explains "A" by providing some details about his/her past, childhood, present qualities or something that would provide a personal anecdote about "A" Eg.: "He was such a good boy!"
- Student "C" writes as the narrator, talking about "A" as from a distance, in the future. "C" may reflect town gossip and provide hindsight needed to make a point about what "A" did, and about what

"B" says about him/her. Eg.:"Little did the town of Smithville know that ..." When you have finished the writing, go on to Part II.

II. The Reading

- This reading is for voices "A", "B", and "C".
- The readers will stand or sit in a triangle:

A
B C

- The reading will take about three minutes.
- The readers may say their five phrases any time during this period.
- All readers will finish within three minutes.
- Readers may read consecutively, all together, backwards, or may repeat any line or lines they choose.
- The group may stop before time is up, as it chooses.
- Groups may show others what they have done or read only for themselves.
- A written appraisal of what you experienced and how it affected members of your group shall be included in your journal, Part III.
- You may want to consider how this exercise applies to the extensive/reflexive modes of writing and the efferent/aesthetic stances of reading.

After the readings, students often applaud spontaneously and are eager to discuss the lesson. Sophisticated, but at first unlabeled ideas tend to come into focus, such as: omniscience, monologue, character credibility, denouement, intended audience, and drama. Most significant, the third journal entry for the day usually concerns the happy experience of working together.

Efferent/Aesthetic

George Kelly advises that "new constructs are not formed when one lacks a laboratory in which to try them out." A man of definition, he goes on to clarify laboratory as "a situation in which there is present, for the person to re-sort, a sufficient amount of the stuff out of which new constructs can be formed." (169) To help students see in a new light how strong, and often unproductive, are their reading biases and to convert these into more self-conscious and self-enabling constructs, we begin the course by offering this "stuff". It includes short pieces of writing, paired to illustrate two reading stances Rosenblatt terms efferent and aesthetic. With no introduction, students are asked to read the handout. Our intitial exercise looks like this:

READING SELECTIONS

Read each of the selections below. Kindly jot down all that occurred to you as you were reading, including your emotional reactions. Did you read both selections the same way or diffently? Be prepared to discuss some of these differences should they occur.

INCIDENT by Countee Cullen (1903-1946)

Once riding in old Baltimore
  Heart-filled, head filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
  Keep looking straight at me

Now I was eight and very small
  And he was no whit bigger
And so I smiled, but he poked out
  His tongue, and called me, "Nigger"

I saw the whole of Baltimore
  From May until December,
Of all the things that happened there
  That's all that I remember

The New Columbia Encyclopedia (New York, Columbia University Press, 1975) under "Baltimore".

Baltimore....city (1970 pop. 905, 759) N. Md., surrounded by but politically independent of Baltimore co., on the Patapsco River esturay, an arm of Chesapeake Bay: inc. 1754. The largest city in the state and the seventh largest in the country, it is a port of entry, a commercial and industrial center, an important railroad point, and a great seaport with extensive anchorage and docks and storage facilities. Large amounts of coal and grain, and iron, steel and copper products are exported. Among Baltimore's leading industries are ship-building, sugar and food processing, copper and oil refining and the manufacture of chemicals, steel, clothing, aerospace equipment, fertilizer, and tin cans....

A class discussion follows the reading/writing to ensure immediate presentation of the widest span of comments. While not every student will venture a response at this very early point in the semester, the large group discussion has the holistic effect of helping all class members identify the range of responses.

Only when the volunteered responses have run their course do we define the terms "efferent" and "aesthetic".

As the "laboratory" continues, more stuff for re-sorting is presented, including the following pieces:

- "The Snake" by Emily Dickinson and an encyclopedia definition of a snake.
- "Breakfast" by Jacques Prevert and excerpts about breakfast and coffee from Laurel's Kitchen by Laurel Robertson; and Carlton Fredericks' and Herman Goodman's Low Blood Sugar and You.

In successive sessions students work in small groups comparing answers. They begin to share their feelings and ideas and to build up a personal profile of themselves as readers by analyzing their own reading processes. They learn to recognize patterns in their reading behavior and to examine potential reasons for these patterns.

This limited sphere--the small group, whose commentary provides social stability to each member, and the reading stuff itself which becomes increasingly more predictable -- allow the student to anticipate each new reading with a growing sense of control. This learning how to know what one will probably do can help to change past behavior. That

is, students begin to see that they can change for the better reading habits that had been academically self-destructive.

Few would disagree that the poem, for example, requires of the reader a stance (and reading speed) quite different from that of the biology chapter, or the recipe for boulliabaise from an editorial on our national debt. By focusing on each task required of the reader--imagining, predicting, experiencing, finding the thesis statement and conclusion, questioning, hypothesizing, doubting, or even arguing--students can develop the kind of attention needed to make meaning out of each reading event. And by sharing their freshly focused responses, they can experience a new security grounded in the reading community that is their own class.

Knowing which stance is most appropriate for each reading can and does shift students' perception of the reading task. Even more important, it shifts their view of themselves from incompetent to competent readers.

Conclusion

To enhance students' reading and writing, basic skills courses may be organized in an endless number of ways. Integration of the two processes into a single course is probably the most valuable way. Our chief criteria are that both criticism and imagination be included. We need to be adventurous enough to ignore traditional deliniations not only of subject matter, time, and space but also of power. To facilitate our students passage to cultural literacy, our mission, as Peter Marin suggests is to "articulate a way of seeing, of feeling, that will restore to the young a sense of [personhood] and potency without at the same time destroying the past."[4] Students must experience themselves "as extensions and makers of culture, and must feel the whole force of the world within themselves, not as an enemy-but as themselves..."(37) While the bounty of cultural is our heritage, it cannot be passively received. Let us empower our students to seize it.

Works Cited

Andrews, Bruce. "Love Song No 23," in None of the Above: New Poets of the USA. Michael Lally (Ed.), Trumansburg, N.Y.: The Crossing Press, 1976, pp. 28-31.

Bernstein, Basil. "Elaborated and Restricted Codes: Their Social Origins and Some Consequences." In A. Smith, (Ed.), Communication and Culture. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966.

Britton, James. "The Composing Process and the Function of Writing." In C.R. Cooper, & L. Odell (Ed.), Research on Composing: Points of Departure. Urbana, Ill.:NCTE, 1978, pp. 13-28.

Cullen, Countee. "Incident" from Color: American Negro His History and Literature. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1969, P. 15.

Dickinson, Emily. "The Snake" from The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson Thomas H. Johnson (Ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1963, PP. 711-712.

Emig, Janet. The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders. Urbana, Ill.:NCTE, 1971.

Emig, Janet. "Hand, Eye, Brain: Some 'Basics' in the Writing Process." (1977), in The Web of Meaning: Essays on Writing, Teaching, Learning, and Thinking. Dixie Goswami and Maureen Butler (Eds.), Upper Montclair, N.J.:Boynton/Cook, 1983, pp. 109-121.

Fredericks, Carlton and Herman Goodman. Low Blood Sugar and You. New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1983.

Gary, Melvin and Sandra Brown. "Gary-Brown Writing Opinionnaire for College Writing Instructors," In Measures for Research and Evaluation. In English Language Arts, Vol. 2., William T. Fagan, Julie M. Jensen, and Charles R. Cooper (Eds.), Urbana, Ill.,: NCTE, 1985, pp. 150-151.

Hamill, Pete. "The Tube Syndrome" and READING SURVEY. In Lynn Quitman Troyka & Jerrold Nudelman (Eds.), Steps in Composition. Fourth Edition. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1986, pp. 2-4.

Kelly, George. A Theory of Personality., New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1963.

Langer, Suzanne K. Vol. 1. of Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967, rpt. Johns Hopkins Paperback, 1970, p. xvii.

Libman, Joan, "School for Marriage," rpt. in Good Housekeeping Magazine, Jan. 1976. In Lynn Quitman Troyka and Jerrold Nudelman, Steps in Composition. Fourth Ed., Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1986, pp. 100-103.

Marin, Peter."The Open Truth and Fiery Vehemence of Youth," Conscious Reader. rpt. in PTA Mag. 63:15-17 Je '69.

Martin, N., D'Arcy, P., Newton, B. and Parker, R. (Eds.), Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum 11-16. London: Ward Lock Educational.

Piaget, Jean and Barbel Inhelder The Child's Conception of Space. (trans. F. J. Langdon & J.L. Lunzer) New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1967, 210.

Polanyi, Michael. Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post Critical Philosophy. Chicago, Ill.:University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 62.

Prevert, Jacques. "Breakfast" in Paroles. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1958, p. 31. (trans. from LES EDITIONS DU PONT Du JOUR, Paris, 1947).

Radl, Shirley. "One Mother's Blast at Motherhood," reprinted from Mother's Day is Over. Warner Books, 1974 in Royce Adam's Think, Read, React, Plan, Write, Rewrite., Third Ed., New York: CBS College Publishing, 1982 pp. 59-62.

Resnick, Lauren. reprinted in Albert Shanker's "Where We Stand" column in The New York Times June 26, 1988, Section E, p. 9.

Robertson, Laurel et al. Laurel's Cooking: A Handbook of Vegetarian Cooking and Nutrition. Petaluma, Ca.: Nilgiri Press, 1976.

Rosenblatt, Louise. The Reader, the Text, the Poem. Carbondale and Edwardsville, Ill.:Southern Illinois University Press,, 1978, 22-47.

Slavin, Robert E. "Learning Together" in American Educator. American Federation of Teachers, Summer 1986, pp 6-11.

Steichen, Edward. The Family of Man. New York: Published for the Museum of Modern Art by the Maco Magazine Corp., 1955.

Notes

1. Aesthetic reading is an attitude used in reading for the pleasure of the journey itself as in poetry or narration, whereas efferent reading is done for the purpose of collecting and acting on information.

2. Reflexive verses extensive writing-The former being mostly informal writing for the self and the latter being mostly formal writing for a more distant audience.

3. Robert Slavin's study of students from elementary through high school who were engaged in cooperative learning activities shows some encouraging results. 86% had consistently higher achievement as well as improved attitudes towards other classmates, particularly those from different ethnic backgrounds. These positive indications were derived from 30 out of 35 studies. While cooperative learning worked for students from urban, suburban and rural schools, and equally for high, middle and low achievers, their success depended on two key elements. Whole groups must be rewarded for high achievement and each student's individual learning must be considered and facilitated by the group. Otherwise, students will return to their usual level of intense competition.

4. This quotation has been changed from the masculine "he" to the neuter "students".